



NEWS

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See MCI v. FCC, 515 F 2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

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FCC ADOPTS ORDER IMPLEMENTING KATRINA PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission” or “FCC”) implemented various recommendations of the FCC’s Independent Panel Reviewing the Impact of Hurricane Katrina on Communications Networks (“Katrina Panel” or “Panel”). The programs and policies stemming from the Panel’s work will improve emergency response capabilities and assist first responders, the communications industry and all levels of government to communicate effectively with one another during emergencies, disasters and public health threats.

Today’s Order extends, by one year, existing Special Temporary Authorizations which exempt Bell Operating Companies (“BOCs”) from enforcement of section 272 and its implementing rules in order to allow them to share non-public, BOC network information with their section 272 and other affiliates to facilitate disaster planning.

Rules were adopted requiring local exchange carriers (LECs) and Commercial Mobile Service Radio (CMRS) providers to have an emergency back-up power source for all assets that are normally powered from local AC commercial power including those inside central offices, cell sites, remote switches and digital loop carrier system remote terminals. The Order also requires certain LECs, CMRS providers and interconnected Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) providers to submit reports regarding the reliability and resiliency of their 911 systems. These requirements will not apply to certain small wireline carriers and Tier III CMRS providers. Certain small VoIP providers will be exempt from filing 911 system reports.

In January 2006, Chairman Kevin J. Martin established the Katrina Panel to review the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the communications infrastructure in the areas affected by this natural disaster and to make recommendations to improve response and recover efforts in the future. The Panel submitted its report on June 12, 2006. The Commission subsequently issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on the Panel’s recommendations.

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The Order adopted today also instructs the FCC's Public Safety & Homeland Security Bureau to:

- Develop and implement an awareness program to educate public safety agencies about alternative communications technologies;
- Continue to work to enhance a voluntary, streamlined approach for collection of outage and situational awareness information during emergencies;
- Continue to reach out to the emergency medical community to facilitate the resiliency and effectiveness of their emergency communications systems, including hospital emergency departments;
- Continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security on developing credentialing standards and ensuring that all communications service providers are treated as "essential personnel" for purposes of the Stafford Act;
- Continue to work with the Department of Homeland Security to promote the Priority Communications Service Programs (*i.e.*, Government Emergency Telecommunications Service, Telecommunications Service Priority and Wireless Service Priority) – particularly among first responders, health care facilities and 911 emergency call centers nationwide;
- Take various steps, in conjunction with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Department of Homeland Security, to facilitate first responder interoperability;
- Promote the implementation of various best practices to ensure a more robust E911 service;
- Take steps to revitalize and publicize the current Emergency Alert System; and
- Work with industry, state and local governments and organizations representing people with disabilities and non-English speaking persons to ensure that they receive emergency information.

Action by the Commission, May 31, 2007, by Order (FCC 07-107). Chairman Martin, and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate and McDowell. Separate statements by Chairman Martin, and Commissioners Copps, Adelstein, Tate and McDowell.

EB Docket No. 06-119 and WC Docket No. 06-63

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